

REMARKS

At the time the present Office Action was mailed (October 12, 2005), claims 1-32 were pending in the above-captioned application. In this response, claims 1, 12, 18, 25, 29, and 30 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-32 remain pending.

In the October 12, 2005 Office Action, claims 1-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and/or § 103 on the basis of one or more of the following references: U.S. Patent No. 1,756,747 to Holland ("Holland"), U.S. Patent No. 1,530,010 to Neilson ("Neilson") and U.S. Patent No. 6,264,140 to McGeer et al. ("McGeer").

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on December 20, 2005. During the telephone interview, the Examiner agreed that claim 1 would be allowable if amended to clarify that the second portion of the retainer is spaced apart from the closed end of the cleat slot by distance sufficient to receive the recovery line. This feature is not fairly taught or suggested by any of the applied references, as was discussed by the Examiner and the undersigned attorney.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the language discussed during the December 20 telephone interview and outlined above. Accordingly, the outstanding rejections of claim 1 should be withdrawn. Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1, and accordingly, the outstanding rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Independent apparatus claims 12 and 18, and independent method claims 25 and 29 have been amended in a manner consistent with that described above with reference to claim 1. Accordingly, the outstanding rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these independent claims. The remaining claims pending in the application each depend from one of the independent claims identified above. Accordingly, the outstanding rejections of these dependent claims

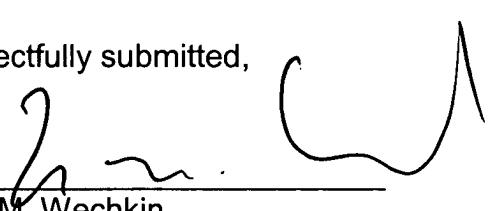
should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-0665, under Order No. 367618007US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: January 4, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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